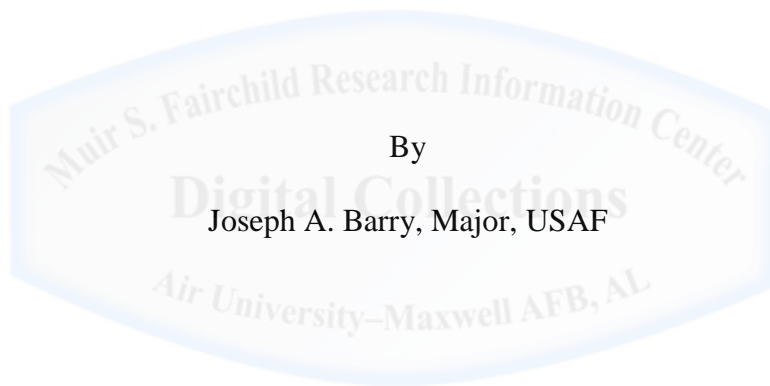


AIR COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE

AIR UNIVERSITY

**BOLSTERING UNITED NATIONS INTELLIGENCE:  
CULTURAL AND STRUCTURAL SOLUTIONS**



By

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## **Abstract**

United Nations (UN) intelligence has struggled to address the complex nature of contemporary internal conflict. The need for independent UN intelligence collection will rise in proportion to the increasing complexity of internal conflict, the continuing problem of weak/failing states, and the growing number of non-state actors. The two main challenges to UN intelligence are cultural barriers that stigmatize information collection, and structural inefficiencies hindering timely and relevant intelligence for senior leaders. This paper identifies several root causes of intelligence stigma within UN member states, and offers corresponding recommendations to reduce cultural barriers. It also discusses structural considerations to intelligence analysis, and proposes the UN create an intermediate-level organization between the field and headquarters (referred to as Regional Analysis Center). Regional inter-governmental organizations offer great promise to help the UN overcome funding and personnel shortfalls. Effective predictive intelligence will improve the chances of dealing with internal conflict before it escalates into a more complicated, costly, and dangerous peacekeeping operation. If the UN does not immediately embrace intelligence reform, it will fail to prevent and mitigate future conflict—at the cost of more blue helmets and innocent lives.

## Part I: Cultural Barriers to UN intelligence

### Introduction

More than twenty years have passed since the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the world is still waiting for a peace dividend. This was the age that major powers could finally cut defense spending, and promote democracy. The United Nations (UN) saw the end of the Cold War as an opportunity to focus on conflict resolution and development. The U.S., fresh from its decisive victory in Desert Storm, confidently looked to humanitarian crises such as Somalia and Haiti as an area to apply its unipolar strength. The results were far from ideal. Genocides in Rwanda and the Balkans shocked the world, occurring right under the UN's nose. Glib assertions of "the end of history" quickly gave way to the sober reality that the world remained a dangerous and unpredictable place.<sup>1</sup>

This monograph examines the current state of UN intelligence in peacekeeping operations (PKO), and identifies two main areas needed to bolster peacekeeping intelligence. The first section examines cultural barriers within the UN that stigmatize intelligence collection. The main recommendation from this section is to create *independent* and *openly acknowledged* UN intelligence organizations. The second section discusses structural concerns of UN intelligence, focusing on the intermediate-level between the field and the headquarters in New York. The primary proposal is for the UN to create a regional analysis center (hereafter referred to as RAC) construct, with significant assistance from regional intergovernmental organizations (IGOs). Progress in cultural and structural barriers will not be a panacea for the UN intelligence. However, the recommendations in this paper will measurably improve the actionable intelligence UN leaders receive.

Despite the seemingly insurmountable hurdles it faces with an inadequate budget and insufficient number of personnel, *now* is the time for the UN to strengthen its intelligence

capabilities. Since the end of the Cold War, complex intra-state violence has accounted for over 95 percent of conflict worldwide.<sup>2</sup> If the UN does not immediately embrace intelligence reform, it will not fulfill its charter commitment “to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war.”

## Scope

Given the broad subject of UN peacekeeping intelligence, it is necessary to limit the discussion and recommendations to the most realistic and impactful solutions. This monograph focuses on UN intelligence *before* it reaches the decision makers. It does not address *what* UN leaders should do with the intelligence. Much has been written on the inability of the UN to act on intelligence warning. It is beyond the scope to repeat the familiar lamentations of the UN’s small budget, member states’ perennial lack of support to the UN, or the weak mandates of UN missions. These shortcomings have not changed since the UN’s founding; it is more useful to acknowledge these shortcomings and find solutions around the imperfect reality.

The second aim is to frame the intelligence discussion to areas appropriate for the UN. Intelligence is a wide subject with an enormous amount of literature covering each facet. Previous authors have written volumes on the challenges of early warning. This discussion will not delve into intelligence indicators for collection. Except for a brief discussion on open sources (OSINT), we will not debate the most appropriate intelligence disciplines—the most complete picture normally comes from *multiple* sources anyway. Instead, we will examine cultural attitudes towards intelligence collection in a multinational setting. The paper also examines intelligence organizational structures with a specific focus on the intermediate level—similar to the “operational level” in military parlance. Of note, this discussion adheres to the Joint Publication 1-02 definitions of *information*: Facts, data, or instructions in any medium or form; and *intelligence*: The product resulting from the collection, processing, integration,

evaluation, analysis, and interpretation of available information concerning foreign nations, hostile or potentially hostile forces or elements, or areas of actual or potential operations.<sup>3</sup>

The extensive experience of national military intelligence offers a valuable source of lessons learned for UN intelligence efforts. There are tremendous differences between national military intelligence and UN intelligence, especially with the much greater resources of the former given their critical role in defending state interests. As we will explore later in the paper, these differences do not preclude recommending or applying the best practices of military intelligence towards UN operations. Many Westerners do not realize the worldwide extent of UN operations: In 2010 the UN had 125,000 military, police and civilian peacekeepers deployed in 16 peacekeeping operations, one African Union (AU) operation and 10 Political Missions—for a total budget of eight billion dollars.<sup>4</sup> In fact, the UN's vast experience in peacekeeping should be a source of knowledge for the irregular warfare militaries commonly face today.

### **The Stigma of UN Intelligence**

The first step of any UN intelligence initiative must be to acknowledge the need to *openly* collect intelligence. The word “intelligence” is nowhere to be found within the UN website and among all of its publications.<sup>5</sup> However, this is much more than a semantics game of replacing the word ‘intelligence’ for ‘information.’ The UN enjoys a reputation of impartiality, legitimacy, and credibility that can enhance its ability to attract sources. Sources with useful information need an identifiable UN organization to approach. Unless the UN creates its own organic organizations, it will continue to rely on sporadic and highly conditional intelligence sharing of member nations. This section examines the best methods for the UN to shed its traditional stigmas with intelligence.

While few doubt the value of intelligence in peacekeeping operations, the benefits of an independent UN intelligence capability may not be immediately apparent. The foremost concern

is reliable and timely intelligence on force protection threats. The UN currently relies predominately on the major powers for intelligence, but the bureaucratic and technological hurdles of intelligence sharing often prevent the on-time arrival of life-saving information. Secondly, given its responsibility to broker peace and verify treaty compliance, the UN requires its own means to obtain the ground truth. The UN Special Commission (UNOSCOM) in Iraq suffered from accusations that the U.S. controlled its intelligence. In the wake of the Iraq weapons of mass destruction (WMD) intelligence failure, critics throughout the international community accused U.S. intelligence agencies of manipulating data to justify the path for war. Whether or not this is true, the UN would benefit from an independent means of intelligence to free it from the agendas of a state or group.

There are four main cultural barriers to UN intelligence collection: Previous abuses by internal security services, host nation sovereignty concerns, mistrust among participating states, the desire to maintain neutrality. The remainder of this section examines these stigmas in greater depth, and offer potential solutions to each area.

The first stigma derives from associating intelligence with internal security forces employed by repressive regimes. Many in the West do not realize the external focus of our intelligence services constitutes the worldwide exception rather than the norm. Although Western nations have specialized internal security agencies such as the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) and Metropolitan Police (Scotland Yard), these agencies enjoy higher levels of legitimacy due in part to the democratic accountability of checks and balances.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, repressive internal security forces played an instrumental role in provoking the 1979 revolution in Iran, and the 2011 revolutions in North Africa and the Middle East.

Sovereignty concerns are a second cultural barrier to UN intelligence. Sensitivities to colonialism are understandable given the large number of PKOs in Africa, Asia, and Latin



America. European contingents operating in these countries must be mindful of this history in carrying out their actions. In times of crisis, political entrepreneurs and party elites find previous colonial powers as convenient scapegoating targets. Political opportunists in the developing world are quick to brand any disagreement or controversy as a “new campaign of colonialism.” Even for the U.S., widespread African mistrust and skepticism frustrated the Defense Department’s attempt to locate the new Africa Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) on African soil.

Rivalry and tension between participating states is a third cultural barrier to UN intelligence. States with tense relationships are often concerned with adversary intelligence monitoring. In 1992, the U.S. halted a proposal from the European Community, Russia, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand to create the Office for Research and Collection of Information (ORCI) in the UN headquarters.<sup>7</sup> Since then, counterintelligence concerns and infighting killed the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) Information and Research (I&R) Unit and the Office of Coordinator for Humanitarian Assistance’s (OCHA) Early Warning Unit.<sup>8</sup>

Competition among states results in sub-optimal intelligence collection and dissemination. First, it stifles forming habitual relationships that foster integrated command and planning efforts. Second, it prevents developing crosscutting information technology systems and architecture. Third, it discourages intelligence sharing agreements. Yet, without multi-national intelligence sharing, the UN is left reliant on limited bilateral exchanges.

Diverse cultures and agendas within coalitions further complicate UN intelligence. As Angela Gendron notes in *The Ethics of Intelligence in Peace Support Operations*, “A member state’s unwillingness to accept an assessment which ran contradictory to their own preferred political position can impede operational efficiency if it leads, as it did in the Bosnian conflict, to

a reduction in operation and intelligence sharing between alliance partners.”<sup>9</sup> Even the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) faces coordination and integration problems with unanimous consent, despite being one of the most cohesive alliances in the world. At one point in Operation Allied Force, the Netherlands prevented bombing Milosevic’s house because of a Rembrandt painting inside.<sup>10</sup>

Mistrust among states often leads to the lowest common denominator where the most capable intelligence producers can only share intelligence under the most time urgent emergencies. Without established sharing mechanisms, intelligence warning often arrives too late for the peacekeeper on the ground. Ugandan Major General Francis Okello, the former force commander for the joint African Union Mission in Somalia, (AMISOM), lists intelligence sharing as one of the biggest problems he encountered.<sup>11</sup> To date, Uganda and Burundi have lost over 250 soldiers in Somalia.<sup>12</sup>

The fourth source of stigma is the desire to maintain neutrality among the belligerents. For obvious reasons, the UN wants to uphold its credibility as an impartial peace broker, and avoid being targeted by belligerents. The 1994 targeting of UN peacekeepers in Rwanda, the 2003 bombing of the UN headquarters in Iraq, and the 2008 attacks in Darfur validate these concerns. As Lakhdar Brahimi commented after the 2007 targeting of UN buildings in Algeria, “I think the UN has been on notice that its flag is not anymore a guarantee for protection.”<sup>13</sup> Once the UN has made the difficult decision to declare a particular state or faction as hostile, it must assume those parties will view any opposing intelligence efforts as acts of war. Until the UN makes that determination, collecting intelligence as a “neutral agent” will remain a sensitive issue.

The growing role of non-state actors in conflict resolution further complicates the situation on the ground for both UN PKOs and military forces. The number of non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) grew exponentially from 29,000 worldwide in 1995, to over two million

in the US alone in 2000.<sup>14</sup> This growing role is not without controversy. The Red Cross has received enormous criticism for providing first aid lessons to the Taliban.<sup>15</sup> When these organizations encounter trouble, it places the burden on the UN and military forces to rescue them. Nadia Schadlow sums up this concern in her article *There is no Neutral*, “Neutral assistance provided in areas that bad actors control is often diverted to armed groups, which also seek to take credit for any assistance that does make it to the population.”<sup>16</sup>

These observations are not meant to impugn the work of NGOs and international relief organizations. The UN and associated military forces need to encourage the assistance of as many humanitarian organizations as possible in present-day internal conflicts. It is understandable certain organizations cannot be tied to governments because such linkages undermine both its mission and its safety.<sup>17</sup> NGOs have often resided in the area of operations long before the PKO arrived; and they will likely be there long after the UN force has left. Yet, there comes a point where NGOs should evaluate if its actions in fact *allow* the main belligerents to perpetuate their atrocities against the population.

### **Reducing Intelligence Stigma**

The following recommendations to reduce cultural barriers to UN intelligence collection directly address the four main obstacles noted above. The recommendations include: Building trust at the local level; developing means for anonymity; exploiting non-intrusive intelligence sources; engaging regional institutions; employing parallel command structure between states when necessary; and understanding the limits of neutrality in contemporary conflict. The editors of *Leveraging For Success in United Nations Peace Operations* unequivocally state, “The UN’s greatest asset is its impartiality.”<sup>18</sup> Therefore, the approaches below capitalize on the UN’s comparative advantage in impartiality, legitimacy, and credibility among the population.

Intelligence stigma resulting from fear of repression *should* be the easiest barrier to overcome given the UN's shared goal with the population to halt mass atrocities. However, the bottom-up flow of information has unique challenges. An at-risk population may not trust a UN force comprised of former colonial states, or states that previously supported the abusive regime. Therefore, UN forces must be mindful of its public face in terms of field patrols, local services, and media engagements. The UN should consider leaders of PKOs from member states that pose the least controversy.

A second challenge is to protect informants' identities from being compromised. The recent Wikileaks controversy highlighted the concern of leaked information jeopardizing the source, his/her family, and perhaps the entire village. There are many concrete steps to protect sources. The first approach is to promote anonymity. In Iraq, for example, coalition forces developed a telephone hotline for Baghdad residents to anonymously report crime and terrorism information.<sup>19</sup> With proper safeguards, online social media platforms provide another means to pass information. In the judicial realm, options include protecting witness identities in court via masks, screens, or allowing testimony remotely through video teleconference. More costly and complicated measures include witness protection programs, or even death benefit payments to the family of sources who die in the line of duty. Some of these proposals require specialized training and adequate funding, and may not be available at the onset of the PKO.

Sovereignty concerns pose a multi-faceted challenge to UN intelligence. The UN should not expect cooperation from governments that are actually committing the abuses. Another consideration is whether the UN has adopted a neutral stance towards the belligerent(s). The UN will enter most operations cautiously and with an escalatory policy of employing violence. Therefore, most PKOs have an initial phase with a relatively permissive environment to conduct operations and collect information. The UN must act decisively in this perishable window to set

future conditions for success—preferably without antagonizing belligerents. However, this concern cannot override the UN’s overall responsibility to protect.

Increasing transparency is an effective means to address sovereignty concerns. UN official Bram Champagne notes one of the largest stumbling blocks to effective UN intelligence is the Status Agreement with the host nation.<sup>20</sup> If possible, the leaders of the PKO should develop a fixed information and intelligence sharing agreement with the host nation. Establishing rules of engagement (ROEs) increases trust and also sets boundaries that, when breached, provide a valuable feedback mechanism indicating a government’s attitude has changed. Although transparency is a valuable aspect of confidence building, spoiler parties usually conduct their activities clandestinely. Therefore, the UN must remain mindful that detecting clandestine activities often requires clandestine means of collection.

Collecting intelligence in a non-obtrusive manner is another step to reduce sovereignty concerns. Open sources (OSINT) of intelligence are passive, plentiful and incredibly insightful. Belying the popular image of James Bond, OSINT accounts for over 90% of all intelligence collected worldwide.<sup>21</sup> OSINT collection referred to as “media monitoring” is the least controversial collection method because it relies on the work of journalists. OSINT has the added benefit of being one of the cheapest and easiest intelligence means. The vast amount of information collected lends itself to the wide variety of intelligence pertinent to contemporary conflicts. Whereas military intelligence tends to focus on adversary militaries, OSINT campaigns are often better postured for inter-agency and multi-disciplinary examinations of political, humanitarian, socio-economic, and security considerations.

Tension among member states is a pervasive obstacle to all forms of UN cooperation. As with coalition military operations, parallel command structures sacrifice expediency for the political gains of inclusiveness. These considerations are crucial given the previously discussed

cultural barriers. Although it is preferable to conduct integrated campaigns, disjointed and inefficient intelligence is better than none at all. UN leaders must accept whatever intelligence contributions participating states are willing (or able) to provide. Prior to establishing a PKO, UN leadership should invite as many member states as possible into the planning process and forge agreements on the intelligence framework. This necessitates planners keep classification levels as low as possible to allow intelligence sharing with the maximum number of coalition participants.<sup>22</sup>

IGOs offer great potential to bolster the legitimacy of PKOs in their affected regions. Regional organizations such as the AU, Association of Southeast Asian States (ASEAN), and the Organization of American States (OAS) can provide instant credibility to an operation that would otherwise appear as external interference. IGOs tend to be relatively cohesive (although not without internal tensions) and robust in terms of financial resources and media access. The members' keen cultural intelligence of the region can better resolve tension between quarrelling members compared to external efforts. This is especially important when neighboring states play the role of spoilers by providing sanctuary for rival ethnic and tribal groups.

In addressing neutrality concerns, it is crucial that the UN not shy away from its intelligence requirements in the field. As Bram Champagne notes in *UN and Intelligence*, "Paradoxically, secret intelligence can serve the idea of impartiality where it informs decision-makers about the actual situation on the ground in the face of disinformation, prejudice, preconceived judgments and sympathies."<sup>23</sup> The previous recommendations on source anonymity are equally applicable to NGO contacts as they are to UN intelligence sources. It may sound brutal, but there needs to be an understanding that if an NGO chooses to remain outside the civil-military operational construct, it cannot expect military assistance from the UN PKO.

## **Conclusions on Cultural Barriers**

This section examined the cultural barriers to intelligence activities in the UN, and identified practical measures to reduce the stigma. The main areas of stigma include previous internal security abuses; host nation and regional sovereignty concerns; mistrust among participating states; and neutrality concerns. The corresponding solutions leverage the UN's unmatched legitimacy, and include building trust with local sources; protecting anonymity; exploiting OSINT; leveraging regional institutions; and finding the right balance between neutrality and impunity with the UN and the growing numbers of NGOs. A full list of recommended solutions appears in Appendix A.

The UN does not have any time to lose in addressing intelligence shortfalls. The Secretary General should immediately form a commission on bolstering UN intelligence capacity. The commission members should include experts across the UN interagency with PKO direct experience. A number of benefits will come from the conclusions of the final report. However, the most beneficial aspect of the commission would be the hearings highlighting the need for intelligence, and directly confronting the stigmas of intelligence. Cultural barriers will not disappear overnight, but the discussions will offer many opportunities to forge compromises to move UN intelligence forward.

Given the increasingly complicated nature of conflict, the UN does not have the luxury of treating intelligence as the responsibility of its member states. The UN needs an independent means to verify atmospherics on the ground, against the competing agendas of member states. In *The Cloak and the Blue Beret*, Walter Dorn notes, "Many failures in the history of UN field operations might have been avoided had the UN taken a more forthright approach to intelligence and possessed a stronger mandate to gather information and improve its information gathering system."<sup>24</sup> Intelligence is far too vital of a function to remain a hidden afterthought in PKO



planning. The next section will explore the best organizational structure to meet the UN's intelligence needs.

## **Part II: Toward an Optimal UN Intelligence Structure**

Whereas the previous section explored impediments to intelligence collection, this section discusses the optimal means of delivering analysis to UN decision makers. After a comparison of UN and military intelligence constructs, the first segment identifies the challenges of integrating disparate information and intelligence into coherent analysis. The second segment explores the strengths and weaknesses of vertical and horizontal organizational structures in relation to providing intelligence to the leadership. The third segment discusses the potential for regional institutions and IGOs to augment UN intelligence efforts. The combined observations of these three segments lead towards this section's main thesis: The UN needs a RAC construct to produce timely and relevant intelligence to senior leaders, and regional IGOs are the best vehicle to accomplish this.

### **The UN Intelligence Model**

The best way to describe the current UN intelligence construct is a pyramid with an extremely wide base of hundreds (if not thousands) of data sources, all filtering to very few leaders at the top. In UN PKOs, the Head of Mission (HOM) exercises control over forces in the field. PKO members commonly have access to sources in the field to augment national-level intelligence from member states. They also have an entire universe of OSINT ranging from "tactical level" reporting by media reporters, to "theater" and "strategic" analysis by think tanks, pundits, NGOs, etc. The Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC) collates situation reports and other operational information into analysis, focusing on medium to long-term threats to the PKO's mandate.<sup>25</sup> Finally, the Joint Operation Center (JOC) integrates JMAC intelligence with



the greater operational and logistical effort.<sup>26</sup> This structure provides leaders at UN headquarters with a point of contact in each PKO.

At the UN Headquarters, the DPKO relies on the Situation Center (SitCen) to analyze multi-source information and intelligence for decision makers. Kofi Anan founded the SitCen in 1993 during the optimistic phase of the UN's peacekeeping role. Its staff is small (less than 50 people), which means that anywhere from one person to only a few people on each shift are responsible for entire regions of the world. In essence, the small staffs at the individual JMACs and the DPKO SitCen replicates the work performed by over a thousand people in a U.S. Joint Intelligence Center (JIC) in regions such as Africa with multiple PKOs and other humanitarian crises. Tellingly, the SitCen's Operations Room has three desks—two for Africa, and *one* for the rest of the world.<sup>27</sup> This places a heavy burden on the SitCen to provide *predictive* intelligence, especially for transnational crises transcending a single operation. This is not an optimal structure to inform the UN leadership.

The SitCen's mandate (listed in Appendix B) illustrates the inherent structural problems of UN intelligence. Mandate #3 states: "To facilitate communications between senior decision makers and field managers. Mandate #5 states: "To support field level Joint Operations Centres (JOCs) and Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMACs) with technical policy guidance."<sup>28</sup> The other mandates include informing UN headquarters and other IGOs such as the AU, European Union (EU), and NATO. In other words, headquarters-level UN analysts must reach into the tactical levels of information, and simultaneously liaise with other strategic-level entities.

### **The Military Intelligence Model**

The vast experience of national military intelligence agencies in operations across the spectrum of conflict provides a useful laboratory of ideas to build UN intelligence capacity. Compared to the UN, state intelligence services enjoy vastly larger budgets and greater support

from their governments. Dana Priest's *The Mission* offers a valuable account on military and diplomatic approaches in contemporary conflict. The book quotes former US Central Command Commander, General Anthony Zinni, who likens the U.S. GCC to a modern-day Roman "proconsul," who's importance eclipses the U.S. ambassadors in the same region.<sup>29</sup>

Yet, these differences in funding and commitment should not overshadow key similarities with national and UN intelligence. Many nations share the UN's struggles with bureaucracy, competing subordinate organizations, and suspicion with other states. Even strong alliances have reservations with intelligence collection: The NATO Handbook only references intelligence on two pages out of 536, and NATO only selectively shares information between members.<sup>30</sup> Similar to a UN PKO, many governments in the developing world are concerned primarily with internal matters and the destabilizing effects of ethnic populations in bordering states. On the other hand, powerful nations such as the U.S. and UK share the UN's global focus. Based on this similarity in scope, the next section examines the Anglo-American intelligence structure, and identifies key implications for the UN.

British and American operational or "theater" level intelligence organizations provide the global scope necessary to support worldwide operations. The British devised theater intelligence centers to manage their colonial affairs, and its philosophy was to bring multiple disciplines and national agencies together.<sup>31</sup> The U.S. developed Joint Intelligence Centers (JICs) after WWII. Interestingly, the U.S. European Command features a combined Joint *Analysis* Center (JAC) in Molesworth, England—with the name highlighting public sensitivities of intelligence collection even among staunch allies. Beyond solely making a virtue out of necessity, the term "analysis center" better describes the unifying purpose behind intelligence collection: To equip leaders with awareness of the situation to make informed decisions. This is a key reason for the proposed title of Regional *Analysis* Center in this paper.

The regional focus of JICs has demonstrably improved intelligence support to operations. Through much of its history, the U.S. Army and Navy have conducted essentially independent wars in their assigned regions of control, and have conducted relatively minor intelligence sharing. Despite the statutory requirement for joint integration (codified into law through the 1986 Goldwater-Nichols Act), the Cold War induced new concerns that “excessive” sharing risked comprising sensitive intelligence. By the end of the Cold War, the U.S. Central Command was not adequately equipped to handle the intelligence demands of Desert Storm, and General Norman Schwarzkopf brought in help from the Pentagon.<sup>32</sup> However, veteran CIA analyst James Marchio argues the combined lessons learned from Korea, Vietnam, and Desert Storm brought improved JIC support in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia, and Kosovo, as well as no fly missions over Iraq.<sup>33</sup>

Regional intelligence centers foster interagency and multinational cooperation, which is a prerequisite for today’s multifaceted counterterrorism (CT) and counterinsurgency (COIN) campaigns. In 2003, the U.S. Defense Department launched the Remodeling Defense Intelligence (RDI) initiative to better synchronize intelligence with operations.<sup>34</sup> The RDI initiative reorganized JICs into Joint Intelligence Operations Centers (JIOC) at each geographic and functional combatant command (in addition to a national-level center). This restructuring attempts to address a common complaint that intelligence analysts are too isolated from their customers, and often produce intelligence for “intelligence’s sake,” rather than to support operations or decision makers. Former Department of National Intelligence (DNI) Director John McConnell succinctly captured the overall post-September 11<sup>th</sup> philosophy of the U.S. intelligence community with the motto: “From a culture of need to know to a culture of responsibility to provide.”<sup>35</sup> The record in intelligence integration since the formation of JIOCs has been uneven at best, proving that bureaucratic cultures are resistant to change.

## **Boosting UN Analytical Capacity**

Given the large amount of tactical information and intelligence collection funneling into UN headquarters, the first priority is to ensure UN organizations effectively collate and synthesize intelligence. As Colleen Duggan states in *UN Strategic and Operational Coordination*, “Many opportunities for early warning and the prevention of violent conflict are missed because of the UN’s inability to effectively collate and analyze the information managed in different corners of the organization.”<sup>36</sup> It is in the analysis, evaluation and distribution phase where the UN continues to experience difficulties.

Opinions differ on the quality of UN tactical intelligence. As Major General Patrick Cammaert, the former Military Advisor to the UN Secretary General, mentioned, “Information gathering never has been the problem in UN Peacekeeping: our UNMOs (UN Military Observers) are top-class HUMINT people.”<sup>37</sup> However, André Roux, Peace Mission Planning Officer in the South African National Defence Force notes, “The real weakness [in UN intelligence collection] still lies at the tactical level.”<sup>38</sup> The truth is somewhere in the middle, but the key to proper analysis for the UN resides between the field and headquarters.

An intermediate-level UN information center between the field and headquarters is not a new concept. In 2000, Lakhdar Brahimi issued a groundbreaking report—at the behest of the Kofi Anan—critiquing UN peace and security operations. Entitled *Report on United Nations Peace Operations*, it is now commonly referred to as the “Brahimi Report.” Among many other recommendations, he proposes an information gathering and analysis body within the DPKO formed by the consolidation of functional experts scattered throughout headquarters.<sup>39</sup> Brahimi also calls for an Integrated Mission Task Force (IMTF) with personnel throughout the UN interagency during a conflict, forming into a planning and operations organization. Crucially, the IMTF would serve between the PKOs in the field and the DPKO at UN headquarters.<sup>40</sup>

Although Brahimi correctly observes the need for intermediate-level analytical entities, his recommendations do not go far enough. The main problem is that the IMTF is not a permanent body, but a collection of dispersed personnel who meet only temporarily. Secondly, it would only form during a crisis, which is a decidedly reactive posture. To truly blunt conflict before it worsens, the UN needs a permanent body continually monitoring events and passing prioritized intelligence to decision makers.

Regional-level analysis centers would benefit the UN in several ways. First, it would filter the uneven quality of information and intelligence reports that are endemic to all intelligence organizations. Second, the RAC would identify trends ranging from short-term to long-term and from micro to macro-level. Far from being just a passive receiver of information, the RAC (assuming it owned the means of collection and had the power to dynamically task human sources) could proactively *focus* intelligence gathering to in a dynamic and proactive manner. A regional-level organization would look beyond a singular problem state or PKO, and is better postured to monitor transnational sources of conflicts. This is critical given the common occurrence of cross-boundary strife resulting from colonial-era boundaries dividing ethnic groups and tribes. Fourth, the RAC would provide the crucial function of prioritizing intelligence to decision makers. A dedicated organization would alleviate the intelligence burden during regional crises that can easily overwhelm a small headquarters staff.

### **The Shape of UN Intelligence**

Having discussed the challenges of collection, analysis, and the merits of a RAC construct, this segment examines the other half of the equation: Delivering relevant and timely intelligence to the leadership. The essential issue is the two-way relationship between the analysis center and the headquarters. This section compares horizontal and vertical intelligence organizational structures. The central point of this segment is the UN needs an intermediate-level intelligence

organization between the field and headquarters, no matter what overall structure it adopts.

In conflict prevention, delivering intelligence to higher leadership requires much more than writing a report, presenting a brief, or sending an email. According to Barnett Rubin, conflict prevention is more akin to “building a political movement” not “merely identifying causes and testing policy instruments.”<sup>41</sup> Preventive intelligence is in essence an advocacy tool. Therefore, the SitCen must pare down its tactical-level information gathering, and re-focus its efforts towards senior-level advocacy. The RAC would be the ideal place to identify, prioritize, and disseminate actionable intelligence for the SitCen. The operative question is what type of structure should surround the RAC.

Westerners typically equate vertical organizations with bureaucracy, inefficiency, and inaction—traits the UN is at pains to overcome. Yet, the main issue is the optimal number of layers in middle management given the nature of the organization. In *Peacekeeping Fiascos of the 1990s*, former CIA analyst Frederick Fleitz, Jr. complains, “Rather than simplify the thicket of bureaus supporting operations in the field, the [Brahimi] report called for the creation of a new layer of bureaucracy between the field and headquarters.”<sup>42</sup> Yet, Brahimi did not propose a new layer so much as a new organization to better manage the intermediate level between field and headquarters. RACs would remove the redundancy of the many entities reaching out to—and potentially overwhelming—the field. RACs would reduce the SitCen’s need to sift through numerous field reports and other tactical minutia, and allow it more time supporting senior decision makers.

Beyond matters of efficiency, intelligence organizations must also balance competing demands of oversight, accuracy, and accountability. Each of these demands necessarily slows the process to prevent intentional abuses or unintentional errors in analysis. The UN needs to look at accountability not just for actions taken, but also for actions *not* taken. An intelligence

organization will not improve until its leaders expect analysts to explain how they missed a key event or trend, or what led to an inaccurate assessment.

Conversely, western commentators normally speak of horizontal organizational structures in terms of nimbleness and flexibility. The common perception is terrorist groups and criminal networks out-smarting and out-maneuvering Western security forces based on their more adaptable structure.<sup>43</sup> In CT and COIN operations, U.S. Special Operations Forces (SOF) organize into small teams with a flat structure, with each sub-organization enjoying direct access to the overall commander. Retired General Stanley McChrystal, the former Joint Special Operations Task Force and International Security Assistance Force commander in Afghanistan, recently commented, “In bitter, bloody fights in both Afghanistan and Iraq, it became clear to me and to many others that to defeat a networked enemy we had to become a network ourselves.”<sup>44</sup>

What does this discussion signify for UN intelligence? In preventing or mitigating internal conflict, the UN also needs to be flexible and adaptable. RACs could easily create small “Tiger Teams” working on focused problem sets. Yet, nimbleness must not come at the expense of flooding decision makers with unprocessed and non-prioritized data in an already hectic crisis environment. Several regional intelligence centers with direct access to UN DPKO leaders would provide the optimal balance.

One horizontal initiative that UN PKOs, JMACs, and RACs can adopt is local early warning. Compared to vertical systems that up-channel conflict warning and wait for top-down pressure to prevent abuse, the local early warning model directly warns the most motivated audience: the potential victims.<sup>45</sup> This lateral warning structure is a common feature in natural disaster response, and is only now catching on within human conflict. Caey Barrs notes in *Conflict Early Warning: Warning Who?* “When civilians are forewarned about potential attack



or abuse, they can better prepare their own evasive protection and discreet relief.”<sup>46</sup> Although local early warning is an operational-to-tactical initiative, it reduces the burden of operational-to-strategic intelligence dissemination. The key enabler would be to empower the RAC to delegate decisions and authorities to the tactical levels. There is often little time to waste during atrocities and genocide. In peacekeeping as in bureaucracies, the most ideal solutions often reside at the lowest management levels.

### **The Role of Regional Organizations**

Admittedly, much of the preceding discussion begs the question how realistic it is to create a RAC given the cultural impediments noted in the first section, and the perennial lack of funding and manpower support in the UN. At times, it can be useful to explore ideal organizational constructs absent real world constraints. According to conventional wisdom, if you do not plan, you plan to fail. Yet, prudence dictates a strong dose of reality in UN planning. The next segment explores regional IGOs as promising venues to assist the UN create RACs.

Regional IGOs would solve the first question most policy makers would ask: Where would the RAC be located? The UN organizes according to five regional commissions: Africa, Europe, Latin America and Caribbean, Asia and Pacific, and Western Asia. Fortunately, the worldwide presence of IGOs matches this construct. Natural candidates include the OAS, the EU, and the AU.<sup>47</sup> ASEAN would be the ideal organization to host the UN’s Asia and Pacific Regional Commission. Another RAC could co-locate with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) to cover the Western Asia Commission. The main consideration here is it needs to be physically located in the region—not just at another office at UN headquarters. In intelligence, nothing substitutes for *being there*.

Regional IGOs would enable UN intelligence organizations to bypass many of the cultural stigmas noted in the previous section. In regards to concerns of host nation sovereignty, the



legitimacy of the IGO would further enhance the credibility of the PKO. To reduce mistrust among participant states, IGOs would be ideal venues for the UN to negotiate the scope of collection, the extent of sharing, and oversight rules for the operation. Such agreements *before* standing up the regional intelligence center would go a long way towards addressing mistrust between member nations.

Co-locating a UN RAC with a regional IGO would be mutually beneficial. From the UN perspective, a preexisting organization would reduce the cost of maintaining a separate facility. The UN could also leverage the manpower of the IGO to reduce administrative costs. In *Preventive Diplomacy at the UN*, Bertrand Ramcharan proposes *Regional Reporteurs* from each UN Regional Commission to report to the UN Security Council and Secretary General on emerging threats to peace.<sup>48</sup> These reporteurs would be ideal as RAC directors.

This co-location could potentially bolster the humanitarian response capacity of member states in that region. The 2006 *UN Global Survey of Early Warning Systems* noted, “Regional organisations are crucial to linking international capabilities to the particular needs of individual countries and in facilitating effective early warning practices among adjacent countries.”<sup>49</sup>

Africa would be an interesting case study since its sub-regional organizations such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) are more cohesive than the AU. A UN analytical organization looking at the entire continent would have the derivative benefit of solidifying the AU’s interoperability with these sub-regional organizations.

### **Conclusions on UN Intelligence Structure**

This section focused on the analysis and dissemination of peacekeeping intelligence to UN decision makers. It highlighted the role of theater joint intelligence centers in U.S. and UK military intelligence, and how Anglo-America lessons learned (both positive and negative) can

inform UN peacekeeping intelligence. The three main areas of discussion were the optimal integration of disparate intelligence sources, the need for an intermediate-level RAC between the field and headquarters, and the benefits of leveraging regional IGOs. This section also noted the characteristics of vertical and horizontal organizational structures, and the balancing act a RAC must consider to achieve the optimal shape. Although there are many considerations in the journey of intelligence from tactical-level collection to strategic-level dissemination, the intermediate and regional levels are key towards strengthening UN capacity. In implementing the proposed RAC construct, the UN must not blindly seek efficiencies at the expense of proper oversight, reporting accuracy, and accountability for results.

### **Bolstering UN Intelligence - Overall Conclusions**

Former UN Secretary General Kofi Anon stated, “No task is more fundamental to the United Nations than the prevention and resolution of deadly conflict. Prevention, in particular, must be central to all our efforts.”<sup>50</sup> The UN cannot perform conflict prevention without timely and relevant intelligence. Moreover, the UN cannot continue to rely on other nations to provide force protection intelligence for its increasingly complex peacekeeping missions. Effective predictive intelligence on internal conflict improves the UN’s chances of addressing internal conflict before it escalates into more complicated, costly, and deadly peacekeeping missions.

This monograph examined the two largest obstacles to bolstering UN intelligence: Cultural barriers stigmatizing intelligence collection, and structural inefficiencies overwhelming analytical support to senior leaders. The obstacles to both areas are daunting, but not insurmountable. In the final analysis, cultural barriers to intelligence are the most difficult to overcome, and these barriers will influence any organizational structure the UN attempts to construct. The best solutions will acknowledge the financial and manpower deficiencies of the UN, and emphasize its strengths in international credibility and legitimacy. Regional IGOs can

play a large role in hosting RACS filter the tremendous amount of tactical collection into focused, actionable intelligence for UN decision makers.

The similarities and differences between national military and UN intelligence influenced the analysis throughout this paper. Given the robust capabilities of particularly the U.S. and UK intelligence services, there are many lessons learned to inform UN intelligence initiatives. Regional-level intelligence centers have served the U.S. and UK well, and are an effective model for the UN. The RAC concept in this monograph may seem overly ambitious, but it serves as a useful planning concept. The cultural, financial, and manpower problems endemic to the UN are precisely why regional IGOs offer so much potential to jumpstart the RAC construct.

Although the UN must quickly embrace reform, it must not enact them without adequate deliberation. Ironically, the recent Wikileaks scandal has led some in U.S. congress to ask why an army private should have access to thousands of U.S. State Department cables. Yet, the key deficiency in U.S. intelligence after September 11<sup>th</sup> was “putting the pieces of the puzzle together” through interagency sharing.<sup>51</sup> This begs the question if the U.S. intelligence community will come full circle in its sharing philosophy. It also remains a cautionary tale for UN intelligence efforts in source protection, striking the correct balance between collection and sharing, and enacting reforms based on reasoned analysis instead of post-crisis reaction.

Despite the enormous challenges in confronting contemporary and future conflict, the international community cannot throw its hands in the air because it seems “too hard.” As Pasi Välimäki notes, “The question of organizing intelligence within the UN will have to be solved sooner or later ... as UN troops will not be able to manage new-generation missions without situation descriptions that are obtainable with the minimum of delay and integrated intelligence systems to support decision-making.”<sup>52</sup> The sooner the UN embraces intelligence reform, the better it will fulfill its mission to protect future generations from the scourges of war.

## APPENDIX A

### List of Recommendations

**1. Commission a diverse panel of experts (with wide UN interagency and PKO experience) to publish a study on improving UN intelligence.**

**2. Build trust at the local level**

- Capitalize on UN's international legitimacy
- Be mindful of PKO's public face in terms of field patrols, local services, and media engagements
- The UN should consider leaders of particular states that pose the least controversy
- Take advantage of source building in the beginning phase before a government restricts access to people and free movement throughout country
- Employ local early warning (pass information directly to the at-risk population, instead of passing it up and waiting for top-down pressure)

**3. Develop means for anonymity**

- Create telephone hotlines
- Create online means to pass tips

Witness Protection:

- Masked testimony
- Remote testimony (via VTC)
- Witness Protection Programs
- Death benefits to source family members

**4. Build trust among PKO member states**

- Employ parallel command structure if necessary
- Establish ROEs with host governments and PKO member states as early as possible (preferably before operations commence) on the scope of collection, the extent of sharing, and oversight rules
- Use lowest classification of information possible to increase inclusiveness
- Seek regional institutions to mediate differences

**5. Exploit non-intrusive intelligence sources**

- Exploit OSINT
- Increase transparency of operations
- Develop a fixed information and intelligence sharing agreement with the host nation

**6. Engage regional IGOs**

- Identify appropriate regional IGOs for each five UN Regional Commissions.  
Recommend: African Union, European Union, Organization of American States, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), and Gulf Cooperation Council

- Create Regional Reporteur position as RAC Director

## **7. Neutrality within Limits**

- Bring as many NGOs as possible to the planning effort
- Incorporate as many NGOs as possible into the Civil-Military PKO construct
- Publish ROEs and expectations with respect to PKO and NGOs
- Be prepared to review intelligence strategy once UN changes posture to declaring a belligerent hostile
- Realize preventive intelligence requires prioritization, and prioritization often requires advocacy.

## **8. Seek Lessons Learned from National Military Intelligence**

- Obtain releasable Lessons Learned reports from each U.S. Combatant Command

## **9. Create Regional Analysis Center (RAC) Structure**

- Become regional hub for tactical-level analysis
- Seek to remove redundancies of information reaching headquarters
- Prioritize intelligence for dissemination to SitCen (what do their bosses need to see?)
- Ensure intelligence analysis is in synch with operational requirements
- Seek appropriate balance between vertical and horizontal organizational structure (timely and relevant intelligence without sacrificing accuracy or accountability)

## **10. Create culture of accountability**

Accountability for:

- Actions taken
- Actions not taken
- Reporting accuracy
- Prediction or early identification of events and trends
- Adhering to rules of intelligence oversight

Do not sacrifice accountability for reasons of efficiency

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Situation Center (SitCen) Mandate**

1. To provide situational awareness through monitoring of developments in DPKO-DFS [Department of Peacekeeping Operations – Department of Field Support] operations and other areas of interest through daily and ad hoc reports and briefings;
2. To provide background assessment papers and analysis to senior decision makers;
3. To facilitate communications between senior decision makers and field missions;
4. To facilitate Headquarters-level crisis response;
5. To support field level Joint Operation Centres (JOCs) and Joint Mission Analysis Centres (JMACs) with technical policy guidance;
6. To liaise with other UN Departments and Offices, UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes, international and regional organisations, such as the AU, EU and NATO, UN Member States and non-governmental organisations and academic think-tanks.

Source: DPKO website

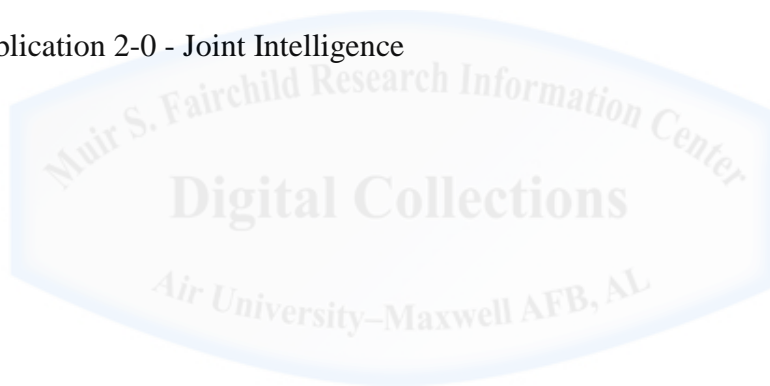


## **APPENDIX C**

### **Principles for Interagency Intelligence Collaboration**

- Establish Strong Relationship Networks
- Build Mutual Trust and Respect for Colleagues
- Share a Common Vision
- Minimize Territorial Issues
- Encourage Continuous Communication
- Eliminate Impediments

Source: Joint Publication 2-0 - Joint Intelligence



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<sup>1</sup> This infamous term comes from Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*. The fallout was so extensive that in his following book, the publishers defensively state *on the inside cover*: "The end of history was never an automatic procedure, Fukuyama argues, and the well-governed polity was always its necessary precondition" (Francis Fukuyama, 2004).

<sup>2</sup> Karen Mingst and Margaret Karns, p. 83.

<sup>3</sup> JP 1-02, p. 175, 179.

<sup>4</sup> Julian Harston, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> Michael Herman, p. 162.

<sup>6</sup> The best U.S. example is the Church Committee of 1975-1976, which investigated the improper use of U.S military intelligence in domestic spying.

<sup>7</sup> Bram Champagne, p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Dorn, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Angela Gendron, p. 172.

<sup>10</sup> Benjamin Lambeth, p. 36.

<sup>11</sup> Lecture at Command and General Staff College, Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas, 2 Nov 2010.

<sup>12</sup> Charles Onyango-Obbo.

<sup>13</sup> Andre Roux, p. 24.

<sup>14</sup> Mari Fitzduff and Cheyanne Church, p. 3.

<sup>15</sup> Jon Boone.

<sup>16</sup> Nadia Schadlow.

<sup>17</sup> This creates the difficult question of whether an NGO should seek protection, and risk violating its core principles of neutrality and independence from government sponsorship (Christopher Ankerson, p. 114).

<sup>18</sup> Jean Krasno, Bradd Hayes, Donald Daniel, p. 242.

<sup>19</sup> Although there have been competing claims on the efficacy of the Baghdad tip line, hundreds of Baghdad residents use it each month based on Defense Department reporting (Sharon Weinberger, 2007).

<sup>20</sup> Bram Champagne, p. 13.

<sup>21</sup> Susanna Campbell and Patrick Meier, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> The JIOC has adopted a stay-low policy (Tyler Akers).

<sup>23</sup> Bram Champagne, p. 13.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Dorn, p 414.

<sup>25</sup> UN DPKO, 2008, p. 71.

<sup>26</sup> UN DPKO, 2010, p. 10

<sup>27</sup> Giselle Chang.

<sup>28</sup> United Nations Peacekeeping.



- <sup>29</sup> Dana Priest, p. 70.
- <sup>30</sup> Michael Herman, p. 162.
- <sup>31</sup> Ibid, p.164.
- <sup>32</sup> Richard Davis, p. 224.
- <sup>33</sup> James Marchio, p. 53.
- <sup>34</sup> Carlos Munoz.
- <sup>35</sup> Office of Director of National Intelligence (ODNI), p. 3.
- <sup>36</sup> Colleen Duggan, p. 349.
- <sup>37</sup> Patrick Cammaert.
- <sup>38</sup> Andre Roux, p. 23.
- <sup>39</sup> The proposed name for this group is EISAS: The ECPS (Executive Committee on Peace and Security) Information and Strategic Analysis Secretariat.
- <sup>40</sup> United Nations General Assembly (UNGA), p. 35.
- <sup>41</sup> Barnett Rubin, p. 37-38.
- <sup>42</sup> Frederick Fleitz, Jr., p. 86-87.
- <sup>43</sup> Moses Naim's Five Wars of Globalization is a seminal thought piece on using a network response to fighting criminal and terrorist networks (Moses Naim, 2003).
- <sup>44</sup> Stanley McChrystal.
- <sup>45</sup> A real-world example comes from Ethiopia, where a field monitor submitted a report of a tribal leader conducting a pre-raid ceremony blessing an attack on an adjacent pastoral tribe. Security forces arrived and forestalled the raid (Douglas Bond and Patrick Meier, p. 133).
- <sup>46</sup> Caey Barrs, p. 5.
- <sup>47</sup> UN Regional Commissions.
- <sup>48</sup> Bertrand Ramcharan, p. 75.
- <sup>49</sup> International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR), p. 3.
- <sup>50</sup> Bertrand Ramcharan, xxvii.
- <sup>51</sup> 9-11 Commission, p. 570.
- <sup>52</sup> Pasi Välimäki, p. 66.

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